

Coins

Currency and coin quiz

By Roger Boye

HERE'S A CHANCE to put your numismatic know-how to the test.

1. A torch, olive branch, and oak branch are depicted on the tails side of the Roosevelt dime. What do they signify?

2. Which of the lower-denomination coins (cent through half-dollar) have smooth edges, and which have reeded edges?

3. Which United States coins minted last year have mint marks on the tails side?

4. Both sides of the great seal of the United States are reproduced on the back of the \$1 bill. One side of the seal contains an eye, part of a pyramid, and the Latin words "*annuit coeptis*" and "*novus ordo seclorum*." What does all that mean?

5. All U.S. coins currently produced carry the words "*E Pluribus Unum*." What do they mean?

6. The reverse of the \$5 bill shows the Lincoln Memorial (Abe is on the front). What is on the back of the \$10 and \$20 bills?

7. When is the only time the U.S. Mint put two dates on coins meant for general circulation?

8. Paper money made today is of what variety? (A) Silver certificates, (B) Gold certificates, (C) United States notes, or (D) Federal Reserve notes.

9. What is unusual about the paper used for U.S. currency that makes the bills difficult to counterfeit successfully?

10. Thomas Jefferson is depicted on

the nickel and on what denomination bill?

ANSWERS:

1. The torch stands for liberty, surrounded by peace or friendship (olive branch) and strength or independence (oak branch).

2. Only the cent and nickel have smooth edges. Incidentally, the number of reeds may vary on coins of the same denomination. For example, Coin World has reported that the number on the dime varies from 104 to 118. To check that, just try counting them.

3. None. On 1977-dated coins, all mint marks are on the front.

4. The eye is supposed to signify God, with the words "*annuit coeptis*" meaning "He (God) has favored our undertakings." The pyramid symbolizes the strength or permanence of the country, but is unfinished since work needs to be done to form a more perfect government. "*Novus ordo seclorum*" means "a new order of the ages." The seal was adopted in 1782.

5. "One out of many."

6. The U.S. Treasury building is on the back of the \$10 bill (Alexander Hamilton, first Treasury secretary, is on the front); and the White House is on the back of the \$20 (seventh President Andrew Jackson is on the front).

7. The Bicentennial quarters, half-dollars, and dollar coins, which are often seen in circulation, bear the dates 1776-1976.

8. D.

9. Among other things, the paper contains small red and blue fibers that can be seen upon close examination. The paper used for most counterfeits does not contain the fibers.

10. The \$2 bill.